Supply of pure drinking water

†*315. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether consumption of polluted and fluoride containing water causes serious diseases affecting health;

(b) whether people living in a number of rural areas of the country are forced to consume such water;

(c) if so, whether Government have formulated any permanent scheme to provide pure and potable water across the nation in order to protect people from such serious diseases;

(d) if so, the details regarding nature of said scheme; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Consumption of water containing fluoride in excess of the prescribed limit of 1.5 mg/litre is harmful to human health. Pollutants, both chemical and bacteriological, are harmful, if found to be in excess of the prescribed safety limits.

(b) to (e) The Government of India have two major programmes to address water quality problems and to provide access to safe drinking water to the rural communities.

(i) Under the Sub-Mission on Water Quality program, financial and technical assistance is provided for tackling specific chemical quality problems like arsenic, fluoride, nitrate, iron, salinity and multiple problems in the affected areas. Technical assistance and advice is given to State Governments on appropriate treatment technologies, safe alternate sources and utilization of recharge/water harvesting and other methods of mitigating quality problems in rural drinking water supply. Financial assistance is provided by the Government of India on duly approved projects with funding pattern of 75:25 basis between Centre and State. In the year 2006-07, Rs. 735.67 crore was provided as Central share for taking up such projects to provide safe potable water in the affected areas. During the current financial year 2007-08, an amount of Rs.1,300 crore has been allocated under this programme. It is proposed to address the problems of all water quality affected habitations in the country under Bharat Nirman programme before 2009.

(ii) The National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme under which assistance is provid"d to States

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

for testing of all drinking water sources in the rural areas by the community using simple to use field test kits to act as early warning system. Awareness generation about water quality issues and its impact on health, training and capacity building of rural communities for conducting water testing and sanitary surveys are major components of the Programme. During 2005-06 and 2006-07, funds to the tune of Rs.57.84 crore and Rs.102.35 crore respectively, has been released for implementation of the Programme. During the current financial year 2007-08, an allocation of Rs. 110 crore has been earmarked for the Programme.

BPL survey in Uttar Pradesh

*316. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted to identify the persons living Below Poverty Line (BPL) in the country particularly in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time by when this survey is expected to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Rural Development conducts the BPL Census to identify the households in rural areas living Below the Poverty Line who could be assisted under the programmes of this Ministry. The BPL Census is generally conducted in the beginning of the Five Year Plan and first such BPL Census was conducted in 1992 for the Eighth Five Year Plan. The Ministry had issued guidelines in September, 2002 to the States and UTs including Uttar Pradesh to conduct the "BPL Census 2002" for the Tenth Five Year Plan. However, the results of the BPL Census 2002 could not be finalized because of the stay order passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 5.5.2003 during the hearing of a Writ Petition No.l96 of 2001 in the matter of PUCL *V/s* Union of India. The stay was vacated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 14.2.2006 and the State Governments were advised to finalise the BPL list in a transparent manner. The process of getting the BPL lists approved by the Gram Sabhias and completion of two-stage appeal system took time in finalization of New BPL lists. The State Governments are reported to have received a large number of objections from the people and it took considerable-time to resolve them. Therefore, it has resulted in delay in finalizing the New BPL lists.

As per latest available reports, 17 States and UTs which includes Uttar Pradesh have finalized the New BPL list after getting it approved by the Gram Sabhas. The Government of Uttar Pradesh have already posted the BPL list on their website *http://ruralsoft.up.nic.in.* In the remaining States and UTs, the finalization of New BPL list is in an advanced stage. The State-wise status is indicated in the Statement.